

Message Text

SECRET

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AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 8056

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, EX, CH

SUBJ: SOVIET VIEWS ON ASIA: CALL ON KAPITSA

1. SUMMARY. I CALLED ON MIKHAIL KAPITSA, CHIEF OF THE SOVIET MFA'S FIRST FAR EAST DIVISION, ON JUNE 9 TO DISCUSS SOVIET VIEWS OF ASIA, ESPICALLY CHINA. KAPITSA WAS, AS ALWAYS, EXPANSIVE AND AUTHORITATIVE IN MANNER, AND SEENUBGKT CANDID. HE SAID THAT NORTH KOREAN PRESIDENT KIM IL SUNG'S TRIP ABROAD WAS A GOOD THING BECAUSE IT EXPOSED KIM TO THE REAL WORLD. KIM HAD WANTED TO VISIT MOSCOW, BUT THE SOVIETS FOUND THE PROPOSED TIMING "INCONVENIENT". ON CHINA, KAPITSA RETITERATED THE STANDARD SOVIET LITANY ABOUT PEKING FACTIONALISM, SHOWING THE "RADICALS" IN THE ASCENT. THE POST-MAO SUCCESSORS WOULD "KILL EACH OTHER OFF" IN FIVE TO

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TEN YEARS, SAID KAPITSA, AND WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY A

"CHINESE" GROUP, NEITHER COMMUNIST NOR CAPITALIST. ON BILATERAL RELATIONS, KAPITSA REVEALED THAT PEKING HAD REDUCED ITS DEMAND FOR SOVIET TROOP WITHDRAWALS TO 20 KILOMETERS, BUT STILL INSISTED ON "UNACCEPTABLE" SOVIET ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF "DISPUTED TERRITORIES." HE SAW THE POST-MAO LEADERSHIP AS PROBABLY EVEN MORE ANTI-SOVIET THAN THAT PRESENT LEADERS AND CONSIDERED THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT SOVIET GESTURE AFTER MAO'S DEATH WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. HE LAUGHED OFF ANY PRC MILITARY "THREAT" TO THE SOVIET UNION, SAYING THAT PEKING IS LOOKING TO EXPAND TO THE SOUTH. HE SAID THAT MOSCOW IS NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE PROSPECTIVE JAPAN-CHINA TREATY, EVEN WITH "HEGEMONY" LANGUAGE, BUT SEES PEKING'S LONG-RANGE GOAL AS AN ANTI-SOVIET ALLIANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. KAPITSA BEGAN BY SAYING THAT KIM IL SUNG'S VISIT ABROAD WAS A GOOD THING. KIM HAS NOT TRAVELED FOR A LONG TIME. "SOME PEOPLE," SAID KAPITSA, HAD NARROW VIEWS OF THE WORLD, SEEING ONLY THEIR SMALL PART AND EXAGGERATING ITS IMPORTANCE. KIM'S VISIT TO PEKING WAS USEFUL, ALTHOUGH IT WAS BADLY PREPARED ON BOTH SIDES, AND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES WERE CLEARLY APPARENT. KIM'S TRAVELS WERE NOT RELATED TO DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. IN VISITING EASTERN EUROPE AND AFRICA KIM ADAPTED HIS RHETORIC TO HIS HOSTS; HE DID NOT SEEM BELLIGERENT, SAID KAPITSA. HOWEVER, SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT PARK CHING HI TOOK MANY SILLY MEASURES AFTER THE FALL OF INDOCHINA. IF THE PARK GOVERNMENT COLLAPSES THE NORTH KOREANS WILL CERTAINLY "COOPERATE" WITH THOSE IN THE SOUTH WHO ARE SYMPATHETIC TO THE NORTH. BUT, SAID KAPITSA, "I AM SURE THAT THEY WILL NOT FIGHT." I AFFIRMED IN STRONGEST TERMS THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO SOUTH KOREA AND COMMENTED THAT WE FELT NO ONE'S INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED BY INCREASED TENSIONS IN KOREA.

3. KAPITSA WENT ON THAT KIM HAD WANTED TO VISIT THE SOVIET UNION AS A PART OF HIS PRESENT TRAVELS, BUT MOSCOW FOUND THE TIMING "INCONVENIENT". THE SOVIET

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LEADERS ARE VERY BUSY WITH ELECTION PREPARATIONS AND BREZHNEV IS ON "VACATION", HE SAID. AUTUMN OF WINTER WOULD BE PREFERABLE; THE EXACT TIMING WOULD BE WORKED OUT THROUGH MUTUAL EXCHANGES. IN ANY CASE, SAID KAPITSA, THERE ARE "NO GROUNDS FOR ANXIETY" IN KOREA.

4. TURNING TO CHINA, KAPITSA SAID THAT TENG HSIAO-PING WILL BE THE SUCCESSION LEADER "TO SOME EXTENT."

TENG IS KNOWN ABROAD, HANDLES FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND IS SUPPORTED BY THE OLD GUARD. ON THE OTHER HAND, CHANG CHUN-CHIAO HANDLES PERSONNEL AND INTERNAL POLITICAL MATTERS AND IS SUPPORTED BY THE RED GUARDS, I.E. THE RADICALS. KAPITSA LISTED CHI TENG-KUEI AND HUA KUO-FENG ("THE CHINESE KGB MINISTER," SAID KAPITSA) AND SOME GENERALS (UNSPECIFIED) AS SUPPORTERS OF CHANG. THE POSITION OF THE SO-CALLED SHANGHAI RADICALS HAS STRENGTHENED IN RECENT MONTHS, SAID KAPITSA. YAO WEN-YUAN AND CHIANG CHING HAVE NOW BEEN ELEVATED TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE POLITBURO. THIS MEANS THAT SIX OF THE NINE MEMBERS OF THAT BODY BELONG TO THE MAO GROUP. MAO CONSISTENTLY FAVORS THE LEFTISTS, SAID KAPITSA BUT IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH NOW TO START ANOTHER CULTURAL REVOLUTION. AT ANOTHER POINT IN THE CONVERSATION KAPITSA SAID THAT MAO'S HEALTH WAS DETERIORATING RAPIDLY. CONCERNING CHIANG CHING'S RECENT ABSENCE FROM PEKING, KAPITSA SAID THAT SHE AND WANG HUNG-WEN HAD BEEN WITH MAO FOR SEVERAL MONTHS IN CHENG TU. CHOU EN-LAI IS IN THE HOSPITAL, AND IS ACTUALLY SICK, SAID KAPITSA. BUT CHOU ALSO USES THE HOSPITAL AS A POLITICAL REFUGE. MEANWHILE OTHERS ARE GRASPING FOR HIS POWER. "WE HAVE HEARD," SAID KAPITSA, THAT CHOU WAS CRITICIZED AT A RECENT MEETING OF THE POLITIBURO AND HIS AUTHORITY HAS BEEN WEAKENED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONTROL COMMISSION WHICH IS RUN BY THE RADICALS.

5. ON PRC FOREIGN POLICY, KAPITSA SAID THAT PEKING SEES THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE CONCLUDING SUCCESSFULLY AND IS WORRIED AT THE PROSPECT. THUS PEKING REPEATS TO ANYONE WHO WILL LISTEN ITS STANDARD SECRET

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RUN-DOWN ON WORLD AFFAIRS, TAKING NO ACCOUNT OF THE COMMENTS OF OTHERS. PEKING SEES A PARALLEL, SAID KAPITSA, BETWEEN SOVIET EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH EUROPE AND ITS OWN EFFORTS WITH JAPAN. PEKING WANTS TO SHOW THAT IT TOO CAN WORK OUT ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. BUT IT ALSO WANTS TO UNDERMINE THE SOVIET EFFORT.

6. ACCORDING TO KAPITSA, JAPAN DOES NOT WANT ANY REFERENCE TO "HEGEMONY" IN THE PROPOSED JAPAN-CHINA TREATY BUT UNFORTUNATELY JAPAN HAS A PROBLEM IN DEALING WITH CHINA, BASED ON A STRONG COMBINATION OF GUILD AND ADMIRATION. JAPAN HAS RESISTED BUT CHINA INSISTS ON SUCH LANGUAGE. IN A TREATY WHICH DOES NOT HAVE MILITARY CLAUSES SUCH AS THIS ONE,

THE "HEGEMONY" REFERENCES HAVE NO IMMEDIATE SIGNIFICANCE, SAID KAPITSA. BUT BEKING'S INTENTION IS TO BUILD AN ANTI-SOVIET ALLIANCE WITH JAPAN. WHEN PRIME MINISTER TANAKA WENT TO VISIT THE GREAT WALL, CHOU EN-LAI TOLD HIM THAT JAPAN AND CHINA MUST BUILD AN ALLIANCE AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION. KAPITSA SAID, "MAYBE WE WILL UNDERTAKE ADDITIONAL EFFORTS" AGAINST THE HEGEMONY CLAUSE, AND CONCLUDED THAT IF JAPAN AGREES TO SUCH LANGUAGE IT COULD "FREEZE" SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS. TODAY THE USSR IS THE TARGET, SAID KAPITSA, BUT TOMORROW IT MAY BE THE U.S.

7. TURNING TO SOUTHEAST ASIA KAPITSA ASSERTED THAT CHINA DID NOT COME OUT AHEAD IN THE INDOCHINA DEBOULEMENT. PEKING DID NOT WANT A STRONG AND UNITED VIETNAM, HE STATED. THE CHINESE THEREFORE SOUGHT TO BUILD UP TIES WITH THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY WITH CAMBODIA. THE SITUATION THERE IS NOT CLEAR YET. THERE SEEMS TO BE A STRUGGLE BETWEEN PRO-CHINESE AND NATIONALISTIC FORCES WITH THE LATTER APPARENTLY COMING OUT AHEAD. WITHIN THE PRO-CHINESE GROUP SOME ARE PRO-SIHANOUK AND SOME ARE ANTI-

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INFO CINCPAC

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AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SIHANOUK. THE REAL LEADERS OF THE NEW REGIME ARE NOT EVEN KNOWN BY THEIR REAL NAMES HE SAID; KHIEU SAMPHAN IS ONLY TENTH OR FIFTEETH IN RANK AND IS NOT EVEN A MEMBER OF THE POLITBURO.

8. IN LAOS THE SITUATION IS MUCH BETTER; NOTHING HAS REALLY CHANGED. IT IS BETTER TO AVOID BLOODSHED. THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CHINESE-BACKED LIBERATION MOVEMENT, AS IN CAMBODIA, AND ONE WITH VIETNAMESE BACKING, SAID KAPITSA. IN LAOS, THE KING AND PRIME MINISTER WILL REMAIN IN THEIR POSITIONS. THE CHINESE TOOK "CERTAIN MEASURES" TO SEEK ADDITIONAL INFLUENCE IN LAOS, SAID KAPITSA, BUT THEY DID NOT SUCCEED.

9. ON THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER TALKS, KAPITSA SAID THAT
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THERE WAS NOTHING NEW. THERE TALKS, HE SAID, HAD AFTER ALL ONLY BEEN GOING ON FOR SIX YEARS AND SUCH PROBLEMS SEEM TO TAKE MUCH LONGER TO SOLVE. NEVERTHELESS IT WAS USEFUL FOR IL'ICHEV TO GO BACK TO PEKING FROM TIME TO TIME. HE WENT BACK AFTER THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS, BUT FOUND THAT THE CHINESE HAD NOTHING NEW TO OFFER. I ASKED WHETHER THE QUESTION STILL CONCERNED THE CHINESE DEMAND FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET FORCES FROM DISPUTED TERRITORIES. S KAPITSA SAID THAT THE WITHDRAWAL ITSELF WAS NOT THE PROBLEM AND THAT THE CHINESE HAD REDUCED THEIR DEMAND TO 20 KILOMETERS. THE ISSUE HOWEVER WAS THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT THERE WERE "DISPUTED TERRITORIES". SUCH AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE SOVIET SIDE. THE TOTAL AREA IN QUESTION CONSISTS OF 34,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS, SAID KAPITSA, OF WHICH 25,000 IS IN THE PAMIRS. THE RIVER ISLAND CONSTITUTE ONLY 340 SQUARE KILOMETERS AND THE SOVIETS HAVE LONG SINCE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO A SETTLEMENT BASED ON THE MAIN NAVIGATION CHANNEL.

10. KAPITSA TURNED ASIDE MY QUESTION ON SPECIFIC NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE PAMIRS, SAYING THAT IT WOULD BE NO PROBLEM TO CHANGE THE LOCATION OF THE GUARD POSTS IF THERE WERE A GENERAL AGREEMENT. CONCERNING THE ISLAND NEAR Khabarovsk, KAPITSA SAID THAT THE SOVIET CLAIM IS AS GOOD AS THE CHINESE, BASED ON THE TREATY

OF 1861 (SIC). THE CHINESE COULD USE THE WATERWAY IF THEY WISHED, BUT THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT NAVIGATION, THEY SIMPLY WANT THE PROBLEM. HOWEVER, THE BORDER IS QUIET, KAPITSA ASSERTED; IT HAS NOT BEEN SO QUIET SINCE 1960. KAPITSA SEEMED SURPRISINGLY CALM CONCERNING THE HELICOPTER CREW. HE SAID THAT MOSCOW NOW EXPECTS THAT THE CHINESE WILL TREAT THEM AS THEY DID THE AMERICAN FLYERS CAPTURED DURING THE KOREAN WAR. HOLDING THEM FOR MANY YEARS.

11. ON SINO-SOVIET TRADE KAPITSA SAID THAT THE ANNUAL AGREEMENT WOULD BE SIGNED SOON AND THAT THE VALUE OF EXCHANGES WOULD BE 200 TO 210 MILLION RUBLES. THE VOLUME WOULD BE ABOUT THE SAME AS THE PAST FEW YEARS. THE NEGOTIATIONS THIS YEAR WERE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT
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BECAUSE THE CHINESE SET THEIR PRICES AT FOUR TO SIX TIMES THE WORLD LEVEL ON SOME ITEMS. ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN TRADE, IN THE FUTURE, KAPITSA SAID THAT MOSCOW COULD SEE TRADE REACHING 300 MILLION RUBLES OR SO, BUT NOT MUCH MORE BECAUSE OF CHINA'S LIMITED EXPORT CAPACITY. PEKING NEEDS TO SELL MORE TO JAPAN, THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER MARKETS IN ORDER TO PAY FOR ITS IMPORTS FROM THOSE COUNTRIES, SAID KAPITSA. CHINA'S CAPACITY IS NOT SUFFICIENT BOTH TO DO THIS AND TO EXPAND TRADE WITH MOSCOW AT THE SAME TIME. THIS YEAR CHINA WILL BUY "ELECTRIC POWERED ENGINES"(PROBABLY GENERATORS), FERROUS METALS, TRUCKS, AIRPLANES AND HELICOPTERS. WHEN I ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE MILITARY USE OF THESE LATTER ITEMS AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION, KAPITSA AND HIS DEPUTY IGOR ROGACHEV SAID THEY WERE NOT WORRIED AT ALL: THESE ITEMS WERE HARDLY ANY MILITARY USE, THERE WERE ONLY TEN OR TWELVE HELICOPTERS EACH YEAR, AND THEY GOT OLD VERY QUICKLY.

12. TO MY QUESTION ABOUT SOVIET PERCEPTIONS OF POSSIBLE CHINESE "THREAT", KAPITSA AND ROGACHEV BOTH SCOFFED, AND KAPITSA SAID THAT PEKING DEVELOPS WEAPONS MAINLY FOR PRESTIGE REASONS AND FROM ITS OWN PERCEPTION OF ITS DEFENSE NEEDS. BUT THE CHINESE ARE NOT IN ANY POSITION TO LAUNCH OFFENSIVE ACTION AGAINST THE VASTLY SUPERIOR FORCES OF THE SOVIET UNION, THEY WOULD BE "COMPLETELY CRAZY" TO UNDERTAKE SUCH AN ATTACK, SAID KAPITSA. THE CHINESE UNDERSTAND VERY WELL THAT IF THE SOVIET UNION IS ATTACKED "WE WILL NOT FIGHT ON THE WALLS WITH BAYONETS AS WE DID IN 1904-05. PEKING LOOKS TO THE SOUTH, HE ASSERTED, QUOTING AN ALLEGED COMMENT BY CHAIRMAN MAO IN 1966 ABOUT "CONTROLLING" SOUTHEAST ASIA. IN BURMA, SAID KAPITSA, THE CHINESE ARE REORGANIZING THE COMMAND STRUCTURE FOR THEIR INSURGENTS AND HAVE PREDICTED THAT

CIVIL WAR WILL BREAK OUT. IN THAILAND THE CHINESE WILL STEP UP THEIR AGITATION AND WILL SEEK TO FOSTER A REGIME WHICH THEY CAN CONTROL. IT WILL CREATE TWO CLIENT STATES ON CHINA'S SOUTHERN FLANK. THE NEXT TARGETS WILL BE INDONESIA AND BANGLADESH AND FINALLY THE CHINESE MIGHT REACH THE OUTSKIRTS OF CALCUTTA. THEIR PLAN, SAID KAPITSA, IS "TO SQUEEZE" SOUTHEAST ASIA.

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13. CONCERNING THE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION OF THE POST-MAO LEADERS, KAPITSA SAID THAT THEY MAY UNDERAKE PROVOCATIONS AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN NATIONAL UNITY AND TO SHOW THAT THEY ARE WORTHY LEADERS. LIKEWISE, THEY WILL HAVE TO BE MORE MAOIST THAN MAO HIMSELF. SOME MODERATE VOICES MAY EMERGE EVENTUALLY, BUT NOT SOON, SAID KAPITSA ALLUDING (AS HE HAS BEFORE) TO THE SOVIET SUCCESSION EXPERIENCE AFTER STALIN. IN ANY CASE "WE SHOULD NOT BE IN A HURRY" SAID KAPITSA. MOSCOW CAN WAIT PATIENTLY AND SEE WHAT THE SUCCESSORS UNDERTAKE.

14. TO MY QUESTION ABOUT A POSSIBLE SOVIET GESTURE AFTER MAO'S DEATH (I.E. A SUMMIT MEETING, AN OFFER OF ECONOMIC CREDITS, A MORE FORTHCOMING POSITION ON THE BORDER TALKS) KAPITSA SAID THAT SUCH A GESTURE COULD HAVE THE OPPOSITE EFFECT FROM WHAT WAS INTENDED. CHOU EN-LAI CAME TO MOSCOW AFTER KHRUSCHEV'S FALL, SAID KAPITSA, IN ORDER TO SEE WHETHER THE NEW LEADERSHIP WOULD REPUDIATE KHRUSHCHEV'S POLICY TOWARD CHINA. AFTER SERIOUS CONSULTATIONS THE NEW LEADERS TOLD CHOU THAT KHRUSHCHEV HAD BEEN RIGHT ON HIS CHINA POLICY AND THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE THE SAME COURSE. IN ANY CASE, KAPITSA WENT ON, THE CHANGES IN CHINA WILL BE SLOW. THE FIRST OF THIS ELITE WILL "KILL EACH OTHER OFF" IN FIVE TO TEN YEARS. THE THIRD GENERATION WHICH FOLLOWS WILL BE A "CHINESE" GENERATION. THEY WILL BE NEITHER COMMUNIST NOR CAPITALIST BUT UNIQUELY CHINESE. BUT PRC POLICY WILL CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY THE VIEW IN THE CHINESE SAYING ABOUT THE MONKEY WHO SITS ON THE HILL WATCHING THE TIGERS FIGHT. THEY VIEW WAR BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS AS NOT ONLY INEVITABLE BUT DESIRABLE.
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